1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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County Clare

476 from time immemorial. Old people here remembered the
246 day when, there being no mowing machines, scythes alone were used. Then the coöperating groups would have been larger and a more pronounced rotation of the working groups from meadow to meadow could have been observed. The same custom occurs in other places; in fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work. Given the different techniques, the same coöperation had taken place in Luogh and elsewhere at the turf cutting, the oats harvest, and the potato planting.

[164] Yet there was no monetary wage or payment involved. In the community of Luogh and surrounding townlands, the only hired labor was to be seen in the meadows of the large farmer (a cattleman with over three hundred acres), who had not coöperated with the small farmers and whose entire way of life, as well as the agriculture he practiced, was different from theirs. Except in so far as the agricultural operation the small farmers were undertaking was economic in itself, it was evident that an interpretation of the incentives for this coöperation must include other factors.

476 Driven to social rather than economic explanation, the
246 authors were able to ascertain that in each case of this
602 coöperation there was an extended family relationship involved. Thus Carey, who had mowed the meadows of Dennis and Seamus Molony and Brian McMahon, was second cousin to them. Peter Barrett was first cousin and uncle respectively of the two farmers whose meadows he had mowed. The young men or boys who had worked Carey's and Barrett's meadows with the latter's wives and children were also relatives; they were sons of the relatives for whom Carey and Barrett had mowed.

So it went over the townland. In no instance, of course, had a man mowed for all his relatives; it was not necessary

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 Windows, as well as chimneys, were taxed, hence the oldfashioned blind [65] wall and the old fireplace (without chimney) being preserved. The daylight was admitted to the kitchen by the door opening. A pad of straw was placed at the door, *sop i mbéal dorais* (Dinneen) on which tailors and other crafts- [294] men used to sit to avoid window-tax. When windows came later on, they were placed on the side of the house sheltered from the prevailing wind.

The gables. The stone built gables are higher or lower according to the form of the roof, which is determined by the wind. In some districts of Ireland [184] especially in the Aran Islands, Connemara, Sligo, Mayo there are often even in very primitive buildings, step gables or serrated gables. In other parts of Ireland the gables are straight up to the top. In Southern and Eastern Ireland the gables are generally of this type. Half thatched or hipped gables are sometimes found in the east, where now and then the thatch is also bent over the gable edge in the same way as in Wales. This is common on mud houses.

How the gables protect the ends of the thatched roof and support the horizontal ribs is shown in pl. XLIV: 2.

The roof. Roof and wall constructions meet one another in the most primitive stages, when the house is only a roof over a foundation wall, of a cavity, or when the roof is constructed similarly to the *clochán*s with the upper course of stones slightly overlapping the lower course. This construction is not known among dwelling houses of to-day, but can be found in outhouses, sweating buths etc.

Roofs made by wide slates or stone flags will be seen in some parts of Ireland when there is a natural access to stones suitable for slates as in Co. Clare where such roofs are found on outhouses with the narrow stone walls carrying the flags.

The Irish house from olden times generally has had not a stone roof, but a thatched roof, *ceann tuighe*. The art of making good thatched roofs is now dying out but in earlier times Irishmen had developed great skill in roofing with thatch.

The thatched roof is supported internally by beams joined in pairs forming [804] the couples, *cúplaí*. The couples are placed at a certain distance and the space enclosed between two couples must be looked upon as a sort of architectural unit. The length of the house can be measured by the number of couples. [171] A very similar kind of measuring is well known in Denmark and Skåne. In many old houses the length of the house seems to indicate traditions from the ancient Irish laws (See Addy, p. 84).

The roof-supporting system of beams varies very little. The beams can

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

be more or less primitive. The couples can be constructed in two slightly different ways depending on the intended height of the roof. In very windy districts near the sea very low, semi-circular roofs that do not catch much wind are used. The roof is streamlined and there is no comb along the roof, pl. XLV: 2.

This roof is made in the following way. Very strong couples rest on the walls and are joined by two crossbeams, the lower called *faradh* and the upper *maide mullaigh*. These joining beams are just as strong as the couples themselves. They are joined to the couples by means of one or two wooden pegs on each side. The couples never meet. Above this arrangement are the purlins, *taobháin*. Transversally across these are slender laths called *cleitheáin*, pl. XLV: 1.

High roofs with combs are supported by couples joined in pairs and held together at the top by a wooden peg, *pionna*. The ridge beam, *maide droma*, rests on the hollows formed at the junctions of the couples, and parallel to it but lying transversally on the couples are purlins, *tobháin*, on each side of which run the whole length of the roof. To brace the couples there are tiebeams, *maidi snaidhm*, pl. XLIV.

On this foundation of roofing, sticks are spread tough sods of grass, the earthen side inwards. The sods cut from the ground can either be made about 5 ft. long and 2 ft. wide or a bit longer than the side of the roof and about 3 ft. broad. In the former case the sods overlap, the higher over the lower. In the latter case the sods stretch from the wall to the ridge and are bent over the ridge. Over the ridge then there are two layers of sods. In both cases the one row of sods overlaps the second row beside it. I have found the short sods used in Southern Ireland, and the long ones in Donegal.

The thatch is put on in two ways. One method of thatching corresponds to the thatched houses of the European continent viz: the scollop-thatching or rod-thatching, pl. XLVI: 2. The other method is the hay-rope or *sugán* thatching known from the border of the North Atlantic and the North Sea. The scollop-thatching is made in such a way that straw, *tuighe*, or mountain grass, *fineán*, is fastened to the sods by means of horizontal rows of rods, *scolb*. The rods are fastened to the underlying sods by twigs, *bannai*. Both *scolb* and *bannai* are of hazel or sally. Oat, wheat, or barley straw is used for thatching but on the western seabord rye straw is used. Rye is considered most durable. According to scollop-thatching the thatching of the ridge is of certain interest. Here and round the chimney-shaft but seldom at the thatch of eaves, *bun tsop*, a kind of ornament can be formed by the twigs and scollops. But this is an ornament caused by the necessity of fastening and

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Donegal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up at right angles to the floor.

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the whealbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table.

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach*. The outshot with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach*, and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, *both* and *tigh dubh*, where the in-

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

352 built bed in the hall beside the fireplace has been common. But this custom
171 of bed is also known over a wider area along the North Sea. As to the outshot it is to be remarked that it must be compared with the outshots of English and Northwest European houses. Where the outshot tradition is natural to the house-types, the outshots are used for purposes and not only for beds.

In Donegal I have found *cailleachs* closed with wooden doors, similar to the built in beds of North-West Europe. The *cailleach* is cut off by curtains.

It has been mentioned that the dresser at an early stage of development has formed part of the partition. This and other facts (the dresser has generally a fixed traditional place, different in different parts of Ireland) seems to indicate that the dresser belongs — as in Scandinavia and West-European countries — to a rather old set of furniture.

The table however seems not to have any prominent place in the old-fashioned houses at least in Western and Northern Ireland. It is always put along a wall in primitive houses, and one can never sit round it. It never attracted the social activities of the house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating social and family-centre. In this respect the table in Ireland has never supplanted the fireplace. There are no references, as far as I am told in the early tales to people feasting at the table. I think that the table [184] does not belong to the original set of furniture. In many fishermen's dwellings in North-West of Donegal it is still missing. The people sit in front [264] of the fireplace round the shallow-basket, *ciseog*, when eating, the basket resting upon the knees of the familymembers. This basket will be seen after dinner-time hanging to dry on the south wall of the house, pl. XLVIII: 2. I suppose this is the native and original "table", at least in certain cultural spheres of Western and Northern Ireland.

[113] [1] In a valuable article by Ludwig Mühlhausen, Contributions to the study of the concrete material culture of the Gaoltacht, Cork Arch. Soc. Vls. XXXVIII, p. 67, and XXXIX, p. 41, et spq., is found a very good description of houses in Dingle Peninsula and Cornamona, Co. Galway. I have not come across any more detailed contribution to the study of the Irish house. From books of travel and novels some information can be picked up. See Béaloideas 1935. p. 57 spq.

[114] [2] The material here presented has been collected by me during journeys in Ireland in the years 1934 and 1935. For the many facilities afforded me in pursuing my investigations in Ireland I must express my thanks to the Irish Folklore Commission and its Director Mr Séamus O'Duilearga, on whose behalf I undertook these studies. I am also grateful to my Irish friends both scholars and country people who kindly lent me their assistance. Here I can only mention Mr Seán O'Suilleabháin, B. A., and Miss Aine Ní Chróinín, M. A., especially for having supplied the Gaelic terms used by me.

[3] As to the Welsh long-houses the cruck construction seems to be an exception (see Peate p. 452).

[4] Cfr. Sigurd Erixon: Skansens Kulturgeschichtliche Abteilung, Führer. Stockholm 1928, p. 92.

[5] *Pinnúir*, f., a gable, a gable-end; fig. a patron, chief, etc. *pinnúir an tighe*, the house-gable, fig. the "head" of the house. Fr. pignon, Eng. pynum. Dinneen, An Irish-English Dictionary.

or partly formed by one or more large pieces of furniture, such as a dresser and a cupboard or press.

While recorded instances of this type are, as we have seen, confined to comparatively small areas of the west and north west, there is little doubt that identical or similar forms were once more widespread in Ulster, Connaught and parts of west Munster, where a strong folk-memory of the regular stalling of cattle in the lower end (the end farthest from the fire) of the kitchen still exists, and where one common house type has the two opposite doors and the lower end cut off by a partition of light material, as in the reconstructed house shown in figure 11. In Leinster and east Munster, in contrast to this, there is little or no tradition of cattle in the dwelling houses, and there is here a form of house in which the relative positions of the entrance door, hearth and hearth wall[1] would make the bringing of a large animal, such as a cow, into the house very difficult and in many cases quite impossible.

A recent article has shown that while the dispersed settlement pattern now dominates almost the whole of Ireland, there were formerly, and to a little extent still are, certain definite areas of village or group settlement type.[2] This, however, does not mean that a distinctive type of farmyard pattern is to be found in such groups or villages; on the contrary, the farmyard type in them is the same as that in the adjoining areas of dispersed settlement. Thus, the groups or villages of east Co. Galway and south Co. Kilkenny are formed of farmyards of the courtyard type, those of west Co. Kerry of the parallel type and those of west Co. Mayo and north and west Co. Donegal of the dwelling house-cum-byre type.

The middle of the twentieth century sees the Irish farmyard, in common with many other elements of rural life, in a stage of transition. On many farms new outhouses, especially new cattle-byres, are being built; in others new dwelling houses have been built, and the old dwelling houses refitted as byres, stores or stables, thus quite changing the aspect of the farmyard. The dwelling-cum-byre type of the north west has virtually disappeared, and in a few years will be no more than a memory; the extended type, in which dwelling house and outhouses form a long block of buildings is also disappearing.

[1] Ó Danachair, Caoimhín: "Hearth and Chimney in the Irish House", Béaloideas, xvi, 102, 104.

[2] Flatrès, P.: "L'Habitat Agricole Aggloméré en Irlande", Chronique Géographique des Pays Celtes, 1954, 112–24.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Luogh is remote. It is nearly half a day's tramp along the roads from its market town, Ennistymon. Even Ennistymon is no metropolis. It is a sprawling village of 1200 people. Neither bus nor train runs between the two.

But Luogh is not entirely isolated by this remoteness. It does not entirely escape modernity. Pleasure-bent motorists from the cities drive through along the cliffs. One can see Atlantic liners standing-to just outside Galway Bay. Many of Luogh's farms have a horse-drawn mowing machine, out of an English steel works, and some of the houses own a mechanical cream separator, even though next door a wooden hand churn is still in use which looks no different from those found deep in the bogs.

But modern tools do not make the life of Luogh. They ease it perhaps, and work a slow effect. But in a short stay one cannot see that change. One's attention turns to the life into which these few strays of modernity find their way.

For Luogh is like many another community of small farms over Clare and southern and western Ireland. Some lie closer to urban centres, some are even more remote. Many are better off; some few are poorer. Some have kept the Irish language better; others have abandoned it altogether for the brogue. But they all have the 'sweet *blas*' of Gaelic still on their tongues and speak an idiom embedded in their common folk life.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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231 As calves grow up they move from the small farm
241 to the large. It is the large farmer who grazes them
434 until they are ready for the English table. Con-
437 sequently, the local cattle fair is still the small farmer's mart, as it was in the middle ages. The big farmer, on the other hand, sells direct to shippers and exporters. In this system, which represents an immense cattle trade within Ireland, moving cattle endlessly from west to east, from small farms to ranches, and on to their final market in England, the big farmer acts, partly at least, as a commercial middleman or 'processer'. In many ways the 'economic war' with England, which the de Valera government is waging today in an effort to wean Ireland from its dependence upon an English market, is necessarily an attack upon the big farmer. . . .

With all this, it is natural that the small farmers
262 should be different consumers from the rest.
184 They live upon a different diet. They eat very little meat, confining themselves to bacon and occasional poultry. Eggs are a great staple and the potato has only slowly retreated from its place of honour, though the countryman makes sure he shall not allow it to betray him as it did in the time of the Famine. Milk, especially in the form of butter, is consumed more than in any European country. All this the small farmer raises at home. Bread and tea, English invaders of the last century, are now the commonest diet of all, and re-

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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present the one staple which he must buy off the farm. This last he shares with the big farmer and the townsman, but otherwise he buys little of the meats and the shop products which fall to the lot of townsman and big farmer.

Neither type of farmer has much use yet for mechanized agriculture as we know it; for both are cattlemen. Nevertheless, the small farmer differs again in the tools he uses. He is the one who clings to hand tools; in poorer districts he must rely upon spade, flail, and scythe. The size of his farm and the poor quality of his land confine him to the manual tools.

Lastly, big farmers and small farmers work their lands quite differently. On the big farm, the farmer-owner uses hired labour. On the small farm, the owner relies upon the united efforts of his family. The countryman's subsistence farming is a family economy in which all members of the family take part—sons, daughters and other relatives. He differs completely in this regard from the large farmer, who is an employer and whose hands are wage earners.

This recitation of the distinguishing marks of peasant economics serves a purpose. It reveals in a roundabout manner what sort of livelihood it is that the countryman wrests from his land. He works a small farm with the help of his family. He raises a small garden of potatoes and a few other foodstuffs which feed both himself and his beasts,

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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light held. They worked with the aid of their sons and of boys from the families who had no machines. At each stage of the process a boy not a member of the family gave his labour; he took his place at meals during the day.

His own mowing done, the farmer paid his debt. He took his machine to the farmer whose son had helped him and mowed that man's meadow. In one instance, a youngish farmer mowed the meadows of three others. In another, a farmer mowed for two others. Certain meadows in Luogh were full-handed enough to do without extra hands; but in five cases, though mowing and stacking took a very long time and they were obviously short of hands, no help was given. Two of these cases were bachelors, who lived alone; two more were 'strangers'.

Here was an important agricultural operation undertaken by the small local community in which provision was made for effective co-operation over and above the usual family economy. It was no isolated instance; it is immemorial practice in Luogh. In fact, during late July and August the entire small farm population of Clare can be seen at work.

There was no monetary payment involved in this work. In the country surrounding Luogh, the only hired labour to be seen worked the meadows of a large farmer, a cattleman with over 300 acres. He did not co-operate; in fact, his whole life was cut out of a different cloth.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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introduced in the Bronze Age, while the ass, which one might suppose to be long-established, was in fact hardly known before the 19th century. The wolf was the worst enemy of man's domestic animals: it was not finally exterminated until the end of the 18th century. Neither the Giant Deer nor the wild boar can be proved to have survived so long as to be contemporaneous with man. But there was a rich native fauna which could be hunted for food to supplement the products of crops and livestock. The red deer is still with us and was known in a wild state in the west of Ireland down to a century ago. Charcoal examined from the remains of domestic and ritual fires corroborates the evidence of pollen-analysis as to the forest cover of prehistoric Ireland. The common trees were oak, willow, birch and hazel, with ash, elm, alder and pine less widely distributed.

The beliefs and ritual practices of the megalith-builders were closely bound up with ideas of magic and fertility: the great stone monuments themselves, still standing after 4,000 years, seem to symbolize man's faith in a future life and were the outcome of the revolution of thought which accompanied food-production. No visitor can fail to be deeply moved by the splendour of the great chamber at New Grange on the Boyne, or by the mystery of the windy cairn on Knocknarea above Sligo. The two main entrances used by the megalith builders were the Boyne Valley and Carlingford Lough (whence archæologists speak of the Boyne and Carlingford cultures). These cultures show many interesting differences and no doubt contributed to the enduring distinction between North and South in matters of material folk-culture.

New crops and animals continued to reach Ireland during the 1,500 years of the Bronze Age (1800-300 B.C.), when the islanders engaged in active trade, exporting the gold of the Wicklows in the form of dress-ornaments and elaborating their tools and implements of bronze, using native copper and imported tin. Archæologists and philologists cannot yet agree as to the period when the Celtic language was introduced to Ireland, nor can the Pictish tongue be identified with any clearly recognized culture. All are agreed, however, that

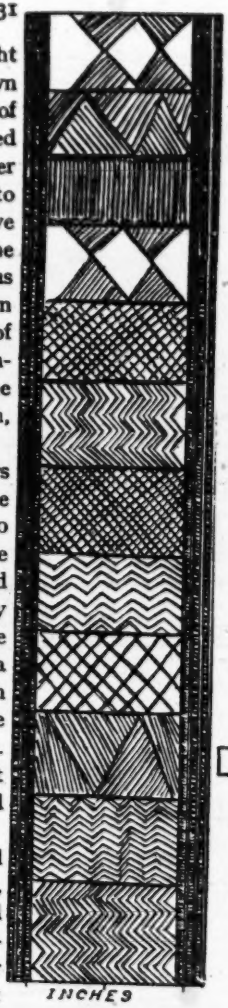

Fig. 6.
Ornament on bronze age pottery vessel from Co. Tyrone, date *c.* 700 B.C.

[184]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

We now come to the roof with its timber framework and thatch. It generally consists of couples resting on the side-walls and joined together by tie-beams at the top; and houses are referred to not as measuring so many feet but as being two- three- or four-coupled. The rib-lengths, between the couples, are a kind of architectural unit.[1] In most old cottages the frame of the roof is of bog-fir, but its use has been superseded by imported "fir." There are many different methods of joining the couples, for example in Donegal they do not actually meet but have a short tie at the top which rounds the roof against the wind (Fig. 20). If the walls are of clay, sod or turf, the couples may be supported on internal beams placed upright against the side-walls, but the purlin method is generally adopted to avoid the thrust of the couple ends. Long beams run from gable to gable, and may be seen projecting outside to allow for the possible movement of the end-walls. This method of roofing allows of greater width than the coupled roof and is preserved, for example, in the old weavers' houses around Lough Neagh, where space was needed for the large looms. (Figs. 22c, 27 & 28.)

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On the framework of couples or purlins lighter timber was placed at intervals and on these were laid at right angles rows of branches or laths, often made out of split bog timber. Where teasels were cultivated for the home woollen industry their dried stalks were employed for this purpose. Then came a layer of "scraws," peeled from a carefully selected spot where the grass is tough with a spade or flachter (Chapter 15) and placed on the roof in long overlapping strips with the matted roots inwards. The scraws were of standard sizes, for instance 12 ft. long by 2 ft. by 1½ inches thick. but they were shorter than this in the south, where the flachter was not known. The scraws were generally sewn to the roof timbers with loops of sugán or fir-rope (Fig. 21). The sod layer, while universal in old houses throughout the north, is not always found in the south. Professor O'Riordain has described old houses in Co. Limerick, for example, where the thatch is sown directly on to the battens.

Fig. 21.

[1] *cf.* the fork-intervals or "bays" of the old English house.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER IX.

FARM BUILDINGS.

First in importance in this pastoral country comes the cow byre, which is often an old dwelling house converted or an extension built on to the end of the kitchen. We have seen that in the west it is not long since the cows were housed in the bottom end of the kitchen, and even now one gets the impression from the proximity of the byre and its smells that there is a reluctance to be separated by any distance from the beasts which play such a large part in the life and traditions of the countryside. Along one side of the byre, above the feeding place, runs the rannel- or revel-tree to which the vertical cow-stakes are secured at intervals: "thin as a ravel-tree" is an expression sometimes heard. Alternatively, in the west, the stakes are held in place by iron staples or perforated stone slabs let into the wall. Iron chains have almost entirely replaced the rush "binnen ropes" (Chapter 14) which were fastened to a plaited ring of sally, hazel or rowan—called a "woody"—sliding up and down the stake. In Co. Clare the animals were secured by a straw rope tied round the horns, and no doubt different methods could be described from various districts. Milking times also vary from place to place, and there is no topic about which so much lore might be collected as about cows and their products. It is commonly said that there is a right and a wrong side on which to milk a cow. In Ireland, so far as my observation goes, it is the right-hand side.

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[184]

[p. 79]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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toil and grazing, by plough and spade, hoof and muzzle, have Ireland's green fields been "moulded."

Fig. 48.
Clips

Although we cannot touch on the other crops and have given a very inadequate idea of the bustle, worries and humours of the Irish springtime, when all the crops demand to be put in the ground at the same time, we must end this chapter with a few comments on the growing season. The general practice when thinning root crops is to work on the knees with the hands: one rarely sees a hoe being used for thinning. Yet paradoxically corn is weeded, if it gets any attention at all, with a pair of wooden pincers or thistle-pullers, called, in Co. Antrim, "clips" (Fig. 48). This tool is already mentioned in a Tour of Ireland in 1752. The weeders are not so common in the south of the country and are fitted with iron pincers in some counties. Another home-made device once familiar in the north was the crow-scarer or "corn-crake," a noisy instrument made on the principle of the watchman's rattle or—to give a modern instance—the gas rattle of the A.R.P. services.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

246 throughout the north of Ireland the hay is made and "saved"—how eloquent is this word of the desperate struggle with the weather!—almost entirely by hand. The traditional date for commencing the hay harvest is the famous 12th of July, and an even more celebrated day—March 17th—was the time for "closing" the hay-fields. Cut with the scythe, supplemented by the hook and by hand-pulling on steep banks or around trees and bushes, the swathes are shaken and gathered into parallel wind-rows or "coles" and then "lapped," that is folded into small muff-like heaps against the leg (Fig. 49). In lapping, the cut grass is smoothed down on both sides so that the rain will run off, while the inside is [184] left open to allow the air to pass through. The practise of lapping is found as far south as Meath and Galway but I have not seen it further south: it would be interesting to trace its exact distribution and compare it with that of other cultural traits. Even in districts well-equipped with machinery the method of lapping is retained, as an alternative to tying into sheaves, for the crops of seed-hay which are a valuable source of income on the small farms of lowland Ulster. This

Lapping Hay, Glendun, Co. Antrim

Fig. 49.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER XIII.

SPADES.

The rich variety of the rural scene is perhaps best illustrated in that most characteristic of Irish implements, the spade. It is worth recalling that the spade-work of immigrant navvies—or "navigators," named after the canal-diggers—was one of Ireland's contributions to England's Industrial Revolution. A visit to city garden-plots will provide a useful introduction to the study of spades, for the countryman insists on his own pattern, and you may play the game of spotting the native heaths of Belfast's or Dublin's retired policemen by identifying the spades of Derry, Fermanagh, Cavan or Clare. Some idea of the variety of tastes catered for can be gained from the output of a Galway spade-factory: including turf spades (Chapter 15) it turns out about 150 shapes of blade.

Obviously it would require prolonged travel and study to record and interpret this fascinating diversity, and to compare the distribution of spade-types with landforms and territorial divisions, with dialects, folk-customs, house-types and other aspects of material culture. But it is possible to give some tentative generalisations which emerge from a preliminary study. The primary division is between the one-eared and the two-eared types (Fig. 61). The former, known as the "loy" or "fack," prevails along the western and southern coasts. It is now unknown in the Six Counties—though the "kib," as it was called, is remembered by a few old men—and is fast disappearing from Donegal and from the Midlands,

Fig. 61.

[p.113]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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184 where its place has been taken by the two-eared spade; and it seems clear that the latter is the result of English influence, though in its Irish forms it differs considerably from the modern English spade.

These differences are no doubt adaptations to native taste and usage: they include the long straight handle, without hand-grip, the long narrow blade with its thick sides, the foot-plates, and the "lift" in the blade, that is the forward bend below the socket, which makes it enter the ground at an angle. North of the Boyne, however, the handle is shorter and is fitted with a crutch-end (Fig. 62), although there are certain "islands" of Irishry, such as the Mourne Mountains of Down, which cling to the long handle. Within the two-eared spade province there are many regional and even seasonal types of blade, for instance the Sligo-Roscommon area demands a long-bladed spade in spring and a shorter type in autumn, the length varying from 16 to 13 inches. In this spade the blade tapers, say from 5 inches at the shoulders to 3½ at the mouth; the Lurgan spade is a long variety familiar from the phrase: "a face as long as a Lurgan spade." While characterising the east coast and the Midlands the type spreads westwards to Sligo without, however, influencing Leitrim, which uses the loy, or Cavan, where the spade has an expanding edge, half an inch or more wider than the shoulders. A strong "cranked lift" of 6 inches (about 22°) is a feature of the Cavan spade, and of the Leenane spade in Galway. North Monaghan, Donegal and Fermanagh (Fig. 62) also use a spade with expanding edge and cranked lift. The taper spades, on the other hand, generally have a "round lift," that is the blade bends forward in a smooth curve, but both the degree of lift and the dish, that is the curve in the mouth, vary from one locality to another. Tyrone and Armagh have a spade which widens slightly towards the mouth but has a round lift instead of the cranked lift of Cavan and Fermanagh. A spade map would throw light on many aspects of rural history and geography, but these humble motters do not engage the attention of our educationalists.

Fig. 62.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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blade with a slightly fish-tailed edge which is a little wider (5 inches) than the foot end (4½ inches): it has a cranked lift. In east Galway a similar loy is fitted with a curious two-piece haft: the foot-rest or "spade-tree" which goes into the socket of the blade is fastened to the stout ash shaft with iron bands (*cf.* Fig. 88). A similar loy was formerly used in Leix and other counties. In Limerick and Kerry the foot-piece is a small wedge pushed into the socket alongside the handle (Fig. 63). In parts of Galway and Mayo the foot-rest is carved out of a broad handle, and a variant of this is the loy of Cavan and Longford (Fig. 61), where the stout foot-rest is some distance above the socket and the handle is curved forward. In Clare, again, the handle bends backwards towards the user.

But loys of all shapes have long handles, about 4 feet in length, with no hand-grip. And they all take the handle in an open socket formed by bending the wings, which may or may not be further secured by nails, over the wood (Fig. 63). This method of hafting goes back to the prehistoric Iron Age in England. In Ireland, bill-hooks, axes and knives from crannogs and forts a thousand years old were hafted in this way, and though I am not aware of any ancient spades having been found in excavations, it is to the La Tène period (Chapter 4) that we should probably look for their origin. But until some attention and support are given to problems of cultural origins and evolution we are merely groping in the dark. Allowance must be made, therefore, for possible inaccuracies in the present account.

Loys of all types can be fitted with the ear or foot-rest on either side according to the practice of the locality or the individual user. Generally speaking, about eleven out of twelve loys are right footed, but towards the east the proportion of left-footed users increases, and as we reach the north-east, where, of course, the two-eared spade is universal, from one-half to two-thirds are left-footed diggers. Hence, presumably, the phrase applied in the north to those of the Roman Catholic faith: "they dig with the wrong foot."

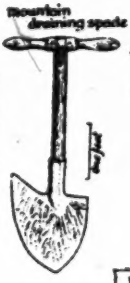

Fig. 64.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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412 While it is difficult to estimate the antiquity of the two-eared
184 spade tradition in Ulster and Leinster, its spread into the west has taken place in the last half century. The decline in the use of the loy is symbolic of the disappearance of the old
[178] fashions, and they tend to vanish together because the culture pattern is a closely interwoven web. Thus it was considered in Donegal a century ago that the new iron spades "would be useless," since few workers had shoes: the wooden spade was adapted to the bare feet.

391 The spade-maker is called on to turn out other types of
412 agricultural tools, spades, shovels and forks. There is the very narrow tapered draining spade and the heavy "mountain draining spade" used in the moorland areas of the north and west (Fig. 64): its great "shark's head" blade is 17 inches long and almost as wide. Occasionally he is asked to rough out a flachter (Fig. 85), which the country smith finishes into the required shape, or it may be, in the south-west, a graffan or heavy hoe (Chapter 10). But as the turf-cutting season comes round most of his energies go into the making of turf slanes (Chapter 15). Of shovels there are several different types, generally classified into two shapes, round-pointed and square-pointed: the latter kind is favoured in the west. There is also the tanged shovel of Co. Wexford. The shovels are long-handled, but short handles are used for special purposes. The welding of the socket in the thin hard steel of the shovels is one of the smith's most difficult tasks (Fig. 65).

412 Then there are short and long-handled square-shouldered digging forks with three or with four prongs (Fig. 65), and the round-shouldered manure-forks or graips, the prongs of which may be round, oval, or in old-fashioned work, square. There are drags for unloading manure, for gathering wrack (Fig. 103), for cleaning drains and gathering stones. Hay-forks may be tanged or strap-hafted, with 4-foot or 5-foot handles and so on. Some country-made forks are illustrated in Fig. 66. It may be added that hayforks with wooden prongs cut from the solid have also been used in the past. Some of the loys, like the old Ulster kib, are essentially wooden spades merely shod with iron, and even this was dispensed with in sandy soils. Wooden

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Lough Neagh—incidentally one of the oldest occupied areas in the country—the valley of the Suir and the Aran Islands. I illustrate a boat-shaped yarn-holder (Fig. 73) and also two types of " calf basket " (Fig. 74), which are tied over the calf's muzzle to prevent it from taking the cow's milk. (In north Antrim, as in Wales, I have seen instead a leather strap armed with nails which is fastened on in such a way that the nails prick the cow's udder). The calf basket recalls the Roman *corbis constricta* which prevented the plough oxen from cropping the vine shoots. In fine work the basket maker uses split rods which he prepares with a " cleaver." The example illustrated (Fig. 75) is made of cow's horn.

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Fig. 74.

Fig. 75.

Then there are the shallow fish baskets, resembling the potato-dish shown in Fig. 31, which the Galway fisherwomen carry on their heads. In Limerick oval trays or " floats " are used for hawking shell-fish or fruit: they are of various sizes from 1 to 2 feet in length. Potato baskets (Fig. 54) and shallow baskets used in connection with wool-dyeing must be mentioned, and I illustrate two kinds of linebasket (Fig. 76) which, like the lobster pots (Fig. 104) are made by the fishermen. The tall apple-baskets used for picking fruit in the Armagh orchards taper down to a narrow base. On the other hand the deep carrying-baskets of the Aran Islands are shaped

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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Line Baskets

Fig. 76. Length *c.* 3 ft.

into a narrow mouth, a feature which is found in all Aran basket-work. Miss Gahan of the Irish Homespun Society regards it as an adaptation to the conditions on the islands, for the contents might easily be spilled owing to the number of loose stone walls which have to be crossed on a journey to the fields. Many of the Aran carrying baskets (" kishauns ") are constructed of coiled straw rope bound together with split bramble (Fig. 77). They no doubt help to keep warm the food carried in them, such as boiled potatoes, boiled in their skins needless to say, in the Irish fashion. Such " lipe-work " was once common in Wales, where seed-baskets, yarn-holders, hassocks and meal containers were made in this way, but in Ireland the only coiled work I have seen outside the Aran Islands is the bee-skep of rye straw, tied with bramble. The illustration shows the small bone pin or awl used by the islanders in threading the brambles. Similar pins, which doubtless had many uses, are frequently found in archæological excavations, particularly on sites where a Mesolithic heritage may be suspected.

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Coiled Straw Basket

Fig. 77.
Note bone pin.

This brings us to the very large topic of the uses made of straw. There is no need to refer to the value of oat straw as fodder or as thatch, though it does not last long as roofing material, and either wheat or rye straw is preferred. A humble example of the use of thatch is shown in the beehive (Fig. 77*a*) Rope (sugán) made of straw or hay still finds many uses, especially for tying down thatch on houses and stacks. It is twisted on a " thraw-hook " of ash or hazel, with a sally hand-grip, but the old styles are declining with the spread of a simple " twister " of strong bent wire (Fig. 78). This type is found throughout the British Isles in many forms some of which are

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Fig. 77*a*.
Height 4 ft.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed by two others dressed in black, running over the hills. 776 [854]

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:—"In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers. 372 796

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here. [184]

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame. 312 778 755

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. Michael Lavelle:— 172

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground. 778 778

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon, *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

151 ***Sight and Hearing.***—Both these senses are very acute, especially the former, which, in the fishermen, is extremely keen, many of these men can see small objects floating on the water at a distance where, even by the aid of a strong glass, most persons would find great difficulty in seeing them at all.

142 This description being a general one, little mention has been made of the differences which exist between the people of different parts of
184 the district. It appears to be the general opinion on the mainland, that the inhabitants of North Inishkea are taller than those of the South Island, and, also, that the natives of both islands are fairer than those of the mainland, and personal inspection has corroborated these opinions. The islanders are readily distinguishable from the mainland people, not only by their dress of blue homespun, but also by their fairer hair and complexion, and their different cast of features.

The men of the district round Portacloy are darker in hair and seem to be of a different type; many of them are exceedingly fine well-built fellows.

142 In no part of the district are the people of small stature, though a large number of them are descendants of dispossessed Ulster people.
114 On the contrary, they appear to be taller and stouter than the inhabitants of the southern part of the country. A statement,[1] originally made by an anonymous writer, has somehow gained currency, and has been repeatedly quoted abroad, noticeably by M. De Quatrefages,[2] and by M. Devay,[3] that the descendants of the Ulster people driven two centuries ago into Sligo and Mayo, had dwindled into dwarfs of five feet two inches high, prognathous and pot-bellied.

This most certainly does not apply to any section of the inhabitants of this part of Mayo, if indeed it were ever true of any part of the counties named, which repeated inquiries and personal observation agree in denying most positively.

The statement is quite unsupported by other writers dealing with this region at the same time. Thus Mr. P. Knight, writing in 1834, says of the people of Erris that "they are generally a good-humoured, good-natured, hospitable, generous race—*of middle size*—active, intelligent, and, when an opportunity offers of showing it, industrious." C. O.[4] describes the people as tall.

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[1] Dublin University Magazine, No. 48, p. 658.
[2] L'Unité de l'Espèce Humain, ii., 316.
[3] Devay Fr. "Du Danger des Mariages consanguins sous le Rapport Sanitaire."
[4] "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley."

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

423 621 of different sizes and various origins into which rural Ireland is divided—townland, parish, barony, diocese, rural district and so on—it is the townland which most closely touches the daily life and social relations of the countryman. The townland is his postal address, for individual farms preserve their historic communal anonymity: they still belong to the townland though they have become separate units since the 'town' or cluster has broken up. The farms rarely carry any names other than those of [103] their owner (Mulligan's place, Thomson's farm or merely O'Brien's) and since there may be a dozen O'Briens in a [551] particular townland various nicknames[1] and patronymics are used to distinguish between them. Thus one farm may be Kilty O'Brien's (from its left-handed owner), another Patsy Kate O'Brien's (from the owner's mother), and a third Yank O'Brien's (a returned emigrant, this). Similarly, the public house takes its title not from the brewers who supply it or from heraldic beasts such as the Red Lion but from the Mooneys or the Murnaghans who own it. Shops in country towns, too, [602] carry personal names, and the nucleus of their trade is built up among blood relations.

423 621 103 The townland names, involving so many land holdings, are legal titles, and their Gaelic names, however erroneously spelt on the Ordnance Survey maps, are fossilized in their current forms. Only an Act of Parliament can alter them. A glance at any six-inch Ordnance map will reveal the strange names that Gaelic imagination contrived and English scribes corrupted. Here are a few which I have come across in Ulster: Ballywillwill, Ballymunterhiggin, Aghayeevoge, Treantaghmucklagh. In all Ireland there are no less than 5,000 townlands beginning with 'Bally', forty-five of them named Ballybeg (little town). Some 2,000 townlands begin with Knock (a hill); there are sixty called Tully and there are eleven Edens. The degree of repetition shows that these names have come down from a time when life was organized on a local basis. There are between 60,000 and 70,000 townlands in Ireland, averaging 325 acres or 423 621 184 ½ sq. mile, and the average townland population in the rural areas is perhaps fifty. In fact their size varies considerably,

[1] Writing in 1682 (*West-Meath*, 115), Sir Henry Piers noticed their prevalence in that county '. . . so as no man whatever can escape a nickname.'

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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since they were based on the fertility of the land rather than its acreage, and it seems that many moorland tracts were not divided until fairly recent times, for they were formerly shared as common summer pasturage by the people of a whole parish or barony, covering 100 sq. miles or more. In such hilly areas the townlands may be as much as 2,000 acres: on the other hand in thickly-settled lowlands they are frequently less than 100 acres, and some anomalous fragments of an acre or two are designated townlands. This diversity also reflects cultural differences both between regions and between various classes from the kings and chiefs down to the humblest of bondmen. The first Ordnance Survey (1830–42) suppressed many of the local names for subdivisions and applied the term townland universally. Though the townland appears to have been equated with an agricultural unit, the ploughland or *seisrach*, it is clear that in many parts of the country 'the cow's grass' was the effective unit of measurement. Of Donegal about 1840 we read: 'The land is never let, sold or devised by the acre, but by 'a cow's grass'. This is a complement of land well understood by the people, being in fact the general standard; and they judge of the dimensions of a holding by its being to the extent, as the case may be, of one, two or three 'cows' grass'. They have divided not only into the fourth part of a cow's grass, called a 'foot', but into the eighth part of a cow's grass, or half a foot, denominated 'a cleet'.'[1] In Bantry, Co. Cork, land was let 'in the wilder parts by what is termed the gneeve, which is the twelfth part of a townland, and therefore of very undefined acreage'.[2]

To judge from surviving examples of clachans and openfields, it was customary for each house in the cluster to have a small enclosure or 'gort' (garden) adjacent to it, their high walls lining a maze of narrow lanes winding haphazard among the houses (Fig. 6). These settlements were characterized by an extreme disorder, as though the houses, in the words of one writer, had fallen 'in a shower from the sky'.[3] Linear villages, it is true, are not uncommon along the western seaboard,

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 26.
[2]*Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1844), s.v. Bantry.
[3]Caesar Otway, *A Tour in Connaught* (1839), 353.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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usually opposite the fire. The absence, in a country predominantly pastoral and consuming large quantities of milk products, of a building or room set aside as a dairy is at first sight strange. Milk cattle, however, were closely identified with the woman of the house, and as we have seen they commonly shared the kitchen with the family. Owing to the scarcity of winter feeding-stuffs, moreover, the supply of milk must have been, down to a couple of centuries ago, largely confined to the summer months and butter-making was therefore undertaken at the booley houses. It must have been difficult to store the considerable amounts of milk products required for winter food, especially when one remembers that most of the peasant houses were made of wattles, sods or mud, and there is some evidence, as we shall see in Chapter IX, that they were kept underground under the old Celtic economy, in even temperatures and safe from the depredations of animals.

However this may be, the kitchen is the traditional place for keeping the churn, and for churning. The stave-built upright plunge churn, prototype of the metal milk-churn which at first faithfully copied its shape, belongs to a family of wooden vessels which has been diffused across the Old World from Ireland to Tibet and now survives most abundantly towards the limits of its range (Fig. 30). Made by local coopers, Irish churns display a considerable variety in shape and size, the shapes differing regionally, the sizes depending on the number of cows kept on the farm, for they were 'made to measure'. The small barrel-shaped churn of the south-west, with a narrow vertical mouth, would appear to be the older style. The mouth, designed to hold a lid through a hole in which the churn staff passes, is usually a separate unit attached to the body by a join—the crib—skilfully contrived and concealed under one of the encircling hoops. Some old churns have hoops of split rods, hazel or sally, but it was reckoned lucky to have one of the hoops of rowan. The staves are invariably of oak: the circular base is made in three pieces, dowelled together and having the joins sealed with rushes. Small churns which have been dug out of the bogs are generally found to have been cut from the solid, and they often have projecting lugs perforated for ease of transport. Those with holed lids were certainly churns, but others

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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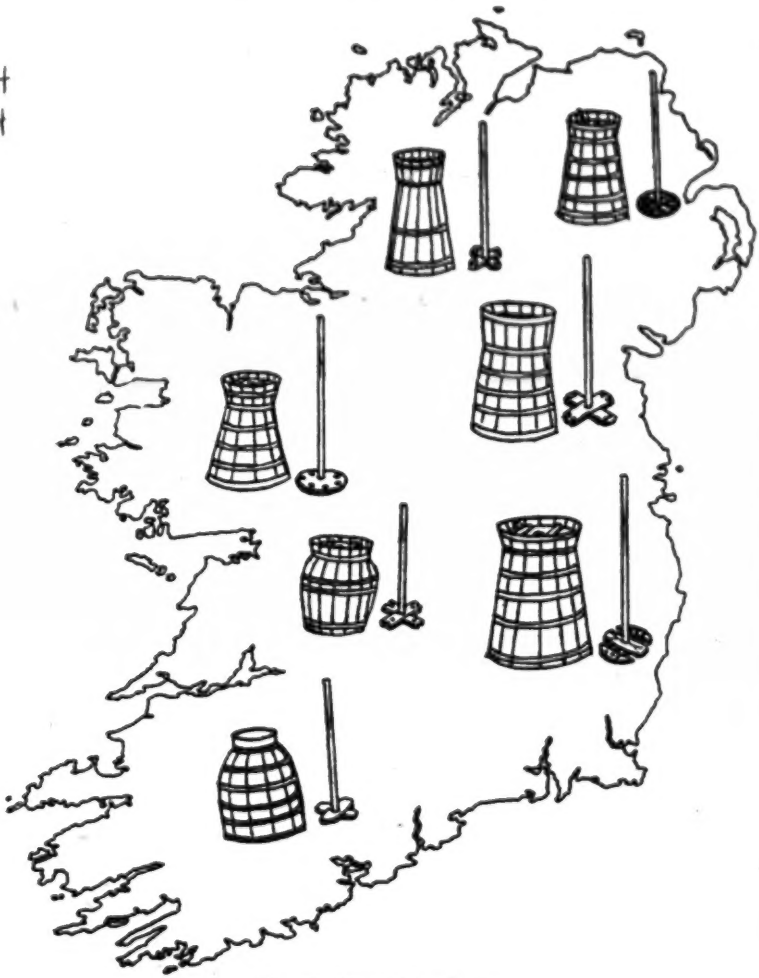

FIG. 30. Map of churn types.

were probably kegs for carrying milk: they have a rim of hoops which would allow a cloth or skin cover to be securely tied on.

234 A most interesting stave-built churn dating from the ninth century was discovered by Gerhard Bersu during the excavation

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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412 mouth which opened a way and prevented the blade from wedging.

It was reckoned that twelve men armed with loys could turn an acre a day.[1] This compares not unfavourably with the estimated rate of 'ploughing' with a caschrom, and is nearly twice the speed of spade digging. In the Munster spade the foot-rest is a separate piece of wood which is wedged into the open socket to one side of the shaft, normally the right. The shape of this wedge, and the dimensions and curve of the iron blade, vary from one district to another. When new the spade mouth has two points resembling a fish-tail, or the blade may taper to the mouth to facilitate digging in light gravelly soils. The old Galway spade has its footpiece cut out of a single piece of wood to which a separate handle is attached. This is considered to lessen the shock when the spade is thrust into the ground, and the device is frequently found on old-fashioned turf spades. A curious forked spade formerly common in Mayo also has this feature. This is the 'gowl-gob', a two-eared wooden spade with twin narrow iron-shod blades, and it was reckoned to be very suitable for making ridges in loose sandy or boggy soils (Fig. 43). This may be the last survival of a prehistoric spade, for 'a two-pointed pronged spade' is said to be an ancient Mediterranean tool,[2] and a 'bidente' is used in parts of Spain.

The two-eared iron spade which is replacing the loy in its last lairs has gradually ousted the one-eared spade in most parts of the country during the course of the nineteenth century. But in doing so it has copied even the minor variations of the spades it replaced, so that the spade remains an index of regionalism, a tool of sociological research as well as an instrument of labour (Fig. 44). Until water-driven tilt-hammers 326 were introduced for the manufacture of spades—perhaps half 412 a dozen of them are still in operation—they were made by ● 184 local blacksmiths for local customers. A good spade-maker occasionally won a reputation which might be compared to that of a medieval sword-forger. The smith needed two helpers to hammer out the metal plates, and the work was very heavy.

[1]Coote, *Ceran* (1802), 31.

[2]*The Cambridge Economic History* (Eds. J. H. Clapham and E. Power), I (1941), 94.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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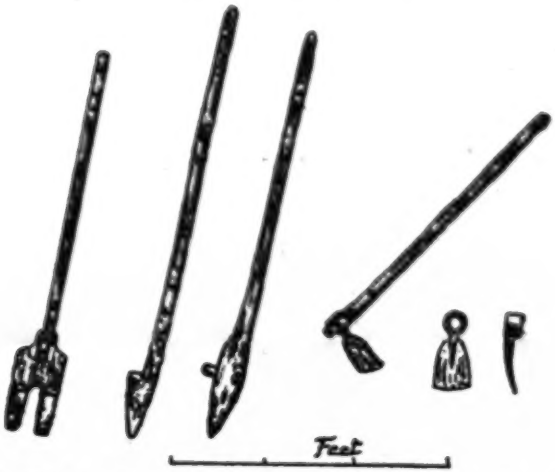

FIG. 48. 'Gowl-gob', Co. Mayo; steeveens, Longford and Cavan; and graffan, Kerry.

The precise requirements of each group of townlands forming a neighbourhood-unit resulted from the balance of many physical, human and economic factors—such as conditions of soil and slope, methods of digging, types of crop, length of arm and leg—cemented by usage and sanctioned by tradition. The 'spade gauge book' of a County Tyrone factory, which has lately closed, lists some 230 different patterns, not counting the special turf spades, and it served only Ulster and the west. I quote the dimensions for the length and breadth, at shoulder and mouth, of the spades of a few districts in Ulster to illustrate the variety and precision of the gauges: Armagh, 18 in. × 5$\frac{11}{16}$ × 6$\frac{11}{16}$; Omagh, 17$\frac{1}{2}$ × 5$\frac{1}{2}$ × 6$\frac{1}{2}$; Dungannon, 17$\frac{1}{2}$ × 5$\frac{1}{2}$ × 5$\frac{1}{2}$; Portrush, 16 × 6$\frac{3}{4}$ × 6$\frac{1}{2}$; Kilkeel, 15 × 6$\frac{1}{2}$ × 4$\frac{1}{2}$; Monaghan, 20 × 4$\frac{3}{4}$ × 6. It will be noticed that the spades vary not only in size but also in shape, some having 'broad points', that is expanding at the mouth, some 'narrow points', that is tapering, and others being parallel sided. The blades range in weight from 3 to 6 lb., in length from 13 to 22 in., in width at the shoulder from 3$\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 in. and at the mouth from 3 to 8 in. In addition great attention is paid to the longitudinal

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[Text continues on p. 137]

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FIG. 44. Map of spade types.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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bend or 'lift' of the blade and to the lateral bend or 'dish'. The lift may be well distributed or it may be concentrated at one point: it may be curved or cranked.

The shape of the blade being thus precisely standardized for each area, various sizes are made to suit individual users and also the seasons of the year. Thus four or five spades of different sizes, ranging say from 13 to 17 in. in length, will be seen on sale in the market towns. In addition some longer spades may be offered for old-fashioned folk, for the blade of the spade is now made shorter than it used to be. These shorter spades, required for digging potatoes, retain the often awkward shape of the long spring spade—designed for ridge-making—which is going out of favour with drill cultivation.

The Irish spade differs from the English not only in its narrow bent blade but also in its thickened sides, its foot-plates, its straight handle and the short straight straps or tails to which the handle is attached. Whereas the English spade derives its digging power from the curvature above the blade, in the Irish spade the curvature is all in the blade. Moreover the Irish prefer a long shaft (4 ft.) without hand-grip, though in Ulster the shaft is short (3 ft.) and headed, i.e. fitted with a cross-piece at the end. The headed shaft, however, is replacing the long headless shaft which is better adapted to the process of sod turning than to digging. With the headed shaft the control of the spade is mainly in the hand that grips the head, which thus tends to be the right hand: consequently this type of spade goes with left-footed digging (Fig. 41).

These differences are largely explained by differences of function, for the primary purpose of the Irish two-eared spade, like the loy which it has replaced, is to turn the sod. It is a hand plough rather than a digging tool, and it owes its remarkable development to the expansion of potato cultivation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To the new crop, as we shall see, the old method of burying the seed in prepared beds was quickly adapted, for ridge cultivation was ideally suited to a root-planting culture, and in fact potatoes are grown in ridges on the Andean plateaux. Thus the adoption of the potato helped to perpetuate tools and methods of cultivation which might otherwise have died out. Nowadays, however,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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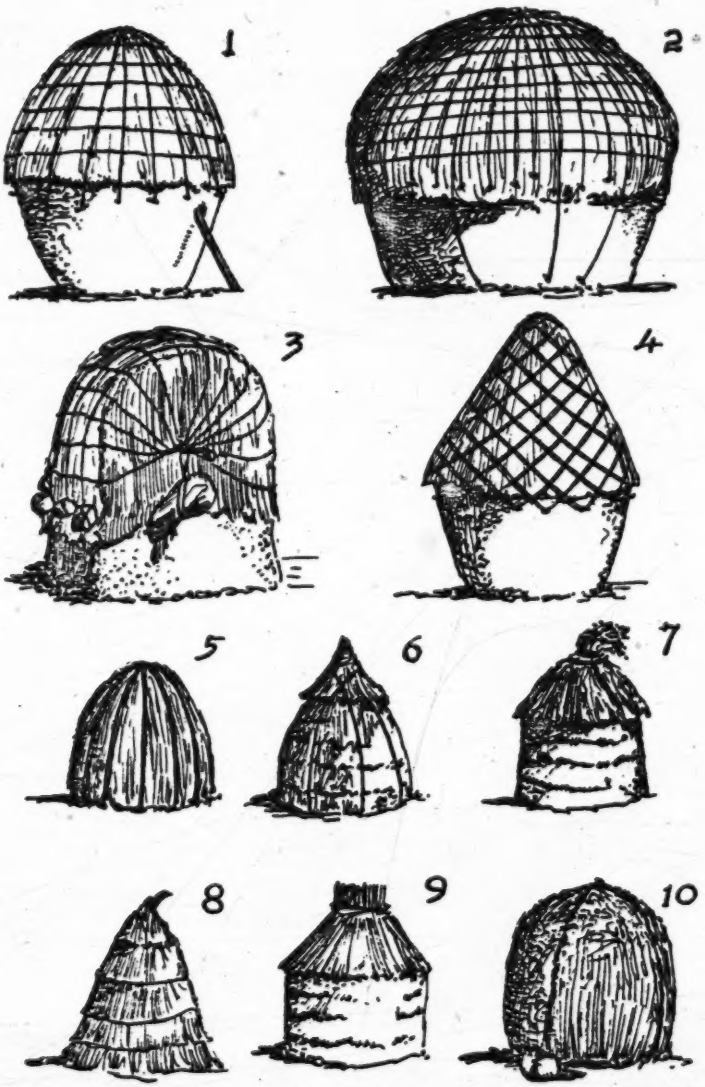

FIG. 52. Stacks and huts roped in many patterns. (1) Cavan (flax). (2) Cork (hay). (3) Mayo (hay). (4) Antrim (oats). (5) Donegal (hay). (6) Donegal (oats). (7) Down (oats). (8) Down (seed hay). (9) Cavan (oats). (10) Down (tramp-cock of hay).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

246 412 The Irish prefer the long-handled scythe. The sned, about five-and-a-half feet long, has the lower handgrip offset, and a pointed iron spike is sometimes driven into the end of the sned to anchor it safely when honing (Fig. 58). A test of a well-

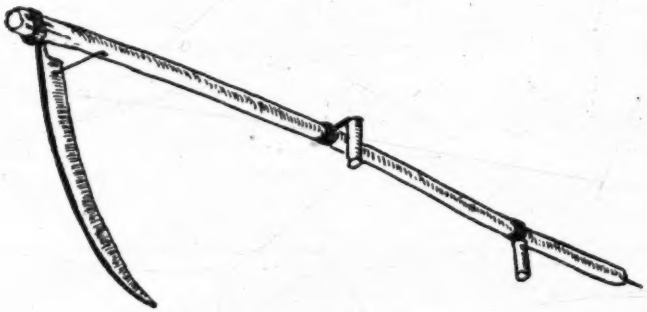

FIG. 58. Long-handled scythe, Donegal.

sharpened scythe is that it should 'cut wool moving downstream', and there was a special charm used in sharpening. The sanded scytheboard (strickle) has now given way to the artifi- [133] cial stone, though hones of natural stone, including the fossilized wood of Lough Neagh, are used locally. A smith-made scythe-blade is highly prized and long after its legitimate life has ended lengths of it will be utilized for choppers and turnip knives. For full efficiency one must be measured for the fitting and hanging of a scythe. The lower handle should be at arm's length from the bottom of the sned, the upper one distant from the top by the length from elbow to finger-tips. The two handles should also be a cubit apart. The angle of the blade is determined by swinging the left leg and adjusting the blade until its point comes within a nicely determined distance of it when the sned is held upright against the right leg. The scythe cradle, for gathering the swathe as it is cut, is rarely met with [184] in Ulster, save for makeshift devices such as a bit of sacking fitted against the 'grass-nail' which joins sned and blade in the angle where they meet. In the south and south-east of the country, where the scythe is an old introduction, quite elaborate cradles both of wood and of finely-wrought iron are to be seen.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

frogs (at Newmarket-on-Fergus) would creep down their throats. The finding of flukes and other parasites in sheep and cattle has helped the belief, and a beast's tongue, if swollen, is supposed to have been "stung by a worm." We have already noted a cure for "worm" in cattle,[24] and the milk of the "Seven Sisters" plant[25] boiled in milk cures similar cases in human beings.[26]

Frog.—Besides jumping down children's throats, the frog cures a cough if held by the legs, put for a moment into the sufferer's mouth, and returned to the water.[27] In a variant of the Bishop Hatto legend, at Bohatey, near Lough Derg, frogs mob and devour a boy who has tortured one of their number.[28] Frogs are said to have been rained on a field in eastern Burren more than once.

Insects etc.—An old woman at Maryfort in 1869 scandalized her neighbours by asserting butterflies to be dwellings of the human soul, and that her own soul would go into a "blessed (tortoise-shell) butterfly." Whence she derived this belief is unknown. I heard about the same time, and, it may be, from the same source, a horrible story of a "spider as big as a *bonnive*" (young pig) sucking the blood of children in the dark, but I forget the details. It is lucky to kill the "daudayle" (*dubh dael*) or "devil's coach-horse," for this hideous but harmless creature has the repute of having guided Judas to Gethsemane.[29] When it "cocks up its hind end," you should crush it, preferably with your bare foot, for you are then spared a day, hour, or week in Purgatory. In Clare I have only found this belief near Tulla, but it is common in other counties.

[24] *Ante*, p. 58. [25] Cf. *ante*, p. 57.

[26] So the late Michael Hazelton, an astrologer and herb doctor near Limerick.

[27] So Mrs. O'Callaghan.

[28] So Capt. Hibbert of Woodpark. A similar tale is told about toads by Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerary in Wales*, cap. ii.

[29] In Ulster the "connach worm" replaces the beetle. The tale says that men were sowing a corn-field when Our Lord and the faithful disciples passed, and that He told the sowers to inform His pursuers that they had last seen Him when they were sowing. The corn at once sprang into ear, and the pursuers, on getting the answer to their enquiry, were turning back when the worm cried out that the seed had only just been sown. The Ulster tale was collected by Mr. W. F. De Vismes Kane, D.L., of Monaghan. In Clare Island (Mayo) Mr. N. Colgan found a similar tale told of St. Patrick and his enemies.

15: Fox E-5 (1962) 1963 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Tory Island

[P. 153, B]

551 **192** In *The Aran Islands*[1] Synge makes the following observations on the system of personal names then in use (1898–1902):

> When a child begins to wander about the island, the neighbours speak of it by its Christian name, followed by the Christian name of its father. If this is not enough to identify it, the father's epithet—whether it is a nickname or the name of his own father—is added.
>
> Sometimes when the father's name does not lend itself, the mother's Christian name is adopted as epithet for the children.
>
> Occasionally the surname is employed in its Irish form, but I have not heard them using the 'Mac' prefix when speaking Irish among themselves; perhaps the idea of a surname which it gives is too modern for them, perhaps they do use it at times that I have not noticed.
>
> Sometimes a man is named from the colour of his hair. There is thus a Seaghan Ruadh (Red John), and his children are 'Mourteen Seaghan Ruadh,' etc.
>
> The schoolmaster tells me that when he reads out the roll in the morning the children repeat the local name all together in a whisper after each official name and then the child answers. If he calls, for instance, 'Patrick O'Flaharty,' the children murmer, 'Patch Seaghan Dearg' or some such name, and the boy answers.
>
> If an islander's name alone is enough to distinguish him it is used by itself, and I know one man who is spoken of as Eamonn. There may be other Edmunds on the island, but if so they have probably good nicknames or epithets of their own.

[114 184] While on Tory Island (Oileán Thoraighe), Co. Donegal, in 1962, I collected the names of all living adults and found the system to be basically that reported by Synge for the Aran Islands, with enough distinctiveness to be worth a separate analysis.[2]

601 Kinship terms are rarely used among the islanders except between young children and their parents and parents' 551 siblings. Cousinship is indicated by saying of a person something like 'his mother and my father were the children of two brothers' (*Bhí a mháthair agus m'athair clann na beirte dearbhráthar*), or 'we are children of brother and sister' (*Támuid clann dearbhráthar agus deirbhsheathar*). But in a small community where the genealogical links between persons are common knowledge, such descriptive explanations are rarely called for. Personal names are used 551 instead and in themselves help to indicate a person's position in the kinship structure by showing his line of descent for up to four generations.

A person will in fact have three sets of names: a Gaelic 'ceremonial' set; an English 'practical' set; and a Gaelic-English 'personal' set. A man's full Gaelic name will consist of his baptismal name followed perhaps by his 'epithet' such as Óg (young—usually means youngest of several brothers), Bán (fair), Mór (big), Beag (small—wee), followed by his surname. Such a combination might yield, [585] for example, 'Pádraig Óg Mac Ruadhraigh.' A woman, strictly speaking, retains her family name on marriage and adds the descriptive phrase 'wife of' (literally 'woman of')

* *With two tables*

551 611 name continuity of such a group can be maintained, converging on the founder's name as in our example, is some measure of the continuing solidarity of the group. This tends to weaken after about six generations and the disintegration of the group is reflected in the native commentary—*Tá na h-ainmneacha caillte*, 'the names is lost.' [182] The attempt to keep the name continuity often conflicts with the desire to distinguish person from person, hence the existence of alternative name types.

The following formula[2] shows the ideal structure of the Tory name using the following symbols: C = Christian name, S = surname, E = epithet, Fa = father's Christian name, Mo = mother's Christian name. A symbol in the lower case indicates that the item can be omitted from the progression of names.

Generation

		0	+1	+2
Patrilateral	Ce +S		Fa e es s +	FaFa e es s / FaMo e es s
			fa / mo	——
Matrilateral			Mo e es s +	MoFa e es s / MoMo e es s

The columns represent the alternative possibilities, the rows the matrilateral and patrilateral 'progression' of names. The formula can be expanded according to the same rules.

To see how this basic choice between matrilateral and patrilateral 'progressions' worked out in practice I tabulated instances of each type of name progression in my collection, distinguishing by sex of nominee (m and f) but ignoring the optional epithets and surnames (Table I). I collected these names separately from the two settlements on the island, East Town (*Baile Thoir*) and West Town (*Baile Thiar*), and they are so listed on the table. It is [184] commonly believed that the East is more traditional than the West, but this does not show up in any differences in the naming systems.

What emerges from this table is the overwhelming preference for taking the father's name (and his father's) by both men and women, and the fact that for both sexes one possible combination does not occur—m/f+ Mo+ MoMo. I am told that this has occurred in the past, but infrequently. The fourth cluster of name types in the table is a group of residual types. The oddities here are the girl who took her father's brother's name and the rest which skip a generation and start with the grandparental names. These cases usually result from an uncle or grandparents bringing up children in the absence of parents. If these relatives are seen as *in loco parentis* then the pattern remains the same as for the majority.

[2 This formula has been corrected according to the specifications given in Man, vol. 63, article 248, p. 195, Dec. 1963. Ann/ISF]

15: Fox E-5 (1962) 1963 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Tory Island
[P. 155, A]

TABLE I

Name type	West Town	East Town	Total
m + *Fa*	24	25	49
f + *Fa*	26	16	42
m + *Mo*	13	4	17
f + *Mo*	6	4	10
m + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	15	5	20
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*	13	4	17
m + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
f + *Mo*+ *MoMo*	0	0	0
m + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	0	3	3
f + *Fa*+ *FaMo*	2	1	3
m + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	3	3
f + *Mo*+ *MoFa*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*	2	1	3
m + *MoFa*	3	1	4
f + *MoFa*	1	0	1
f + *Fa*+ *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	3	0	3
f + *FaFa*+ *FaFaFa*	0	1	1
f + *FaBro*	0	1	1
m + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	3	0	3
f + *MoMo*+ *MoMoFa*+ *MoMoFaMo*	1	0	1
	112	70	182

Table II summarizes the 'laterality preference' as it affects men and women respectively.

TABLE II

	Patrilateral	*Matrilateral*	*Total*
m	72 (70·6 *per cent.*)	30 (29·4 *per cent.*)	102
f	67 (83·75 *per cent.*)	13 (16·25 *per cent.*)	80
Total	139 (76·4 *per cent.*)	43 (23·6 *per cent.*)	182

The figures in parenthesis are percentages of the row totals.

The overall preference is, as we have seen, patrilateral, but there is an interesting minority preference amongst males for matrilateral names. Practically a third of the men and less than a sixth of the women have matrilateral names.[7] There are several explanations for this trend amongst males. It may stem from the large number of widows with sons, or from the name continuity of the descent system. In a number of cases it follows from the fact that a man is given his father's Christian name as his own and hence takes his mother's name to distinguish him, although this is not all that common.

Such a highly personalized naming system only works within the particularistic boundaries of a small community.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. In 1846, 25 years before Edward Tylor pronounced his famous anthropological definition of culture, William J. Thoms introduced into English the word "folk-lore," which he defined as "the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc., of the olden time." Ethnology, a scientific discipline whose focus is primitive culture in the Tylor tradition, has had for almost a century its parallel in the humanistic discipline of folklore, whose focus is the culture of the folk, or folklore, in the Thoms tradition. During this time, ethnology has evidenced a humanistic current in its concern with primitive religion, ideology, and esthetics. The discipline of folklore, on the other hand, has evidenced a scientific current, mainly in the research of scholars belonging to the "Finnish School," whose approach to cultural dynamics resembles that of the "American Historical School" of ethnology, and of eastern and northern European folklorists (who often call themselves ethnographers as well) who have been making rather broad cultural studies of peasant communities somewhat in the anthropological mold. American ethnologists employ the term folklore to designate only the oral literature of peoples—their myths, legends, folktales, anecdotes, proverbs, riddles, songs, and the like. I will employ the term in this sense when I deal with Inis Beag esthetics in Chapter 4.

Ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the universities and elsewhere in the Republic of Ireland, but folklore in the humanistic tradition is strongly developed (Delargy 1957; Dorson 1966). The deliberate recording of the immense body of folklore in Ireland began in the early part of the last century, was kindled by the Gaelic Revival, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation, first, of the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936. For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the oral literature and material traits, and their associated behavior, of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the people; moreover, their visits have been brief and intermittent, they have depended on a limited sample of respondents, and most of their queries have been guided by Sean O Suilleabhain's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (the Irish equivalent of the American *Outline of Cultural Materials* and British *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*), which does not include many categories of significance to anthropologists. Since my wife and I were interested primarily in the nonmaterial elements of Inis Beag culture, and since the oral literature of the folk has been well studied by commission and other folklorists, we placed less emphasis on material culture and folklore in our ethnographic work.

101
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The culture of Inis Beag about to be described is that of 1959 and 1960, and if I intrude data from earlier or later fieldwork I will label them as such. My wife and I also collected a large body of cultural materials in three other Irish islands, for the purposes of making cross-cultural comparisons and testing hypotheses concerning culture and personality concomitants of island living. The Inis Beag tradition is shared in large measure by the inhabitants of neighboring islands, especially those of Inis Thiar, and the several cultures together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the Irish system considered as a whole. Many of the peasant customs of Inis Beag are shared with rural peoples on the mainland, where

[184]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

as "sea rods" and are accumulated by several islanders, dried, and shipped by small boat in May or June to a factory on the mainland to be processed for their iodine content. One man received 90 pounds for his sea rods in the spring of 1960. Ribbon and black weed usually are cut at the time of planting and are carried immediately to the fields, while the other two types are pulled throughout the year and stacked along the coast or in outbuildings. The most effective seaweed fertilizer is black weed, because its "sap" permeates the soil most rapidly; but it and string weed are in short supply in Inis Beag and are most available to Terrace villagers.

Any landowner can collect seaweed on the strand and along the shore bordering the western part of the common land. So much red weed washed ashore on the easily accessible beach during December of 1959 that men from all four villages gathered it during the Christmas season, when work usually is at a standstill. Along the rest of the Inis Beag coast, areas for seaweed collecting are assigned to each village and to every family holding land within the community. Low Village gathers along the west sound, although a short strip of shoreline is assigned to High; Castle and High have collection rights along the eastern portion of the common land, and they also gather from the Atlantic coast near the ends of the roads leading from their respective communities; and, Terrace obtains its seaweed along the east sound, except for areas near the lighthouse assigned to Castle families. Long ago, a portion of the Quarter of the Castle was assigned to the Quarter of the Lake, but the traditional seaweed rights near the lighthouse were maintained.

On days suited for seaweed collecting, the coastline of Inis Beag is alive with moving forms during the several hours that the tide has ebbed. Men wade out on the bared reefs to cut or pull plants, which they pile in woven sally rod baskets, called "creels," and carry to horses and asses tethered on the paths above "high water mark." Sometimes a man will lead his ass to the edge of the water and load it directly, if footing is secure, and he may be aided in the task of carrying creels by his wife and children. The weed then is transported to the fields and dried on the fences or placed directly on the "gardens;" weed which has been stored from the previous year also is spread on the plots, sometimes several weeks before seeding takes place. There is a wide difference of opinion among farmers as to whether or not seaweed should be put down dry, and, if spread, how long it should be exposed to rain before "rotting" dispels the "juices." The same differences of opinion mark the evaluation of the efficacy of various fertilizers and their use at the several stages of "setting" a garden.

One of the tasks of the agricultural agent is to test soils and advise farmers as to which kinds of seaweed and other fertilizers are best suited for their land. But he seldom is consulted, and if his advice is sought, it is more often than not disregarded. Family and village traditions still guide farming procedures to a great extent, and experimentation is a rarity. Terrace Village farmers employ all four types of seaweed, in part because it is a village custom, but also because they have access to most of the string and black weed in the island. This practice is lauded by the agent as being scientifically the most effective; however, he takes no credit for the Terrace idiosyncracy. Among other important duties performed by

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

262
264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
515 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[153] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

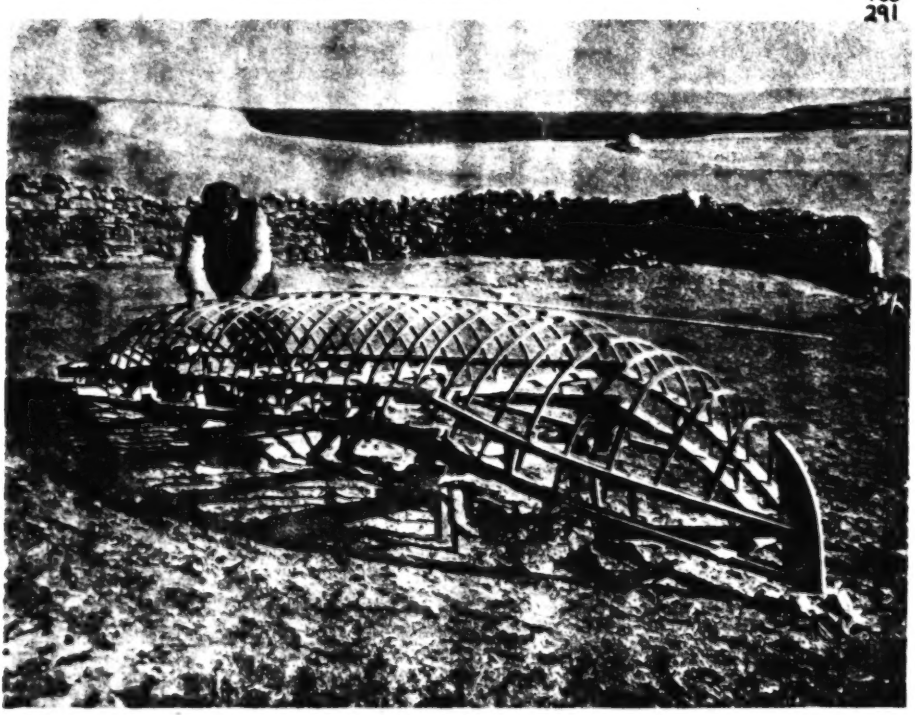

Figure 10. Assembling lashes in the construction of a canoe

folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A *curach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage. Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor, some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and grouped dwellings with a main road.

• 184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but [829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk [628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of 628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the 184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which [231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals. [512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do [823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect 628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally 184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from 177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to 178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and [342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are [461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more [275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter [241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use [421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways. Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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inveterate wrack-boomers. The separateness of Terrace villagers was made most apparent at the time of the shipwreck through the aggression, both overt and covert, directed against them by their fellows.

The behavior of Low villagers, on the other hand, is often the opposite of that of Terrace people less than a mile away; for instance, the folk of Low are the latest risers and milkers, the least industrious, and the most prone to spend time in the pubs. They claim to be descendants of the earliest immigrants in the seventeenth century and are the most boastful of family genealogies. However, most of the landless householders live in Low and as such are held in low repute by landed villagers. People here are the most receptive to tourists, and the two pubs which attract outsiders and the several private homes in which tourists may lodge all are located in Low. It is said that Terrace folk do not need and are indifferent to tourists, whereas Low villagers could not survive without them, either economically or psychologically. Although islanders today visit nearby islands and the mainland less than did their forebears at the turn of the century, the people of Low are considered the most traveled, past and present, of the local population.

As for attitudes directed outward, most islanders regard the culture of Inis Thiar as more traditional than their own. Often heard is the assertion that 70 years ago the inhabitants of the two islands were almost alike as to behavior and beliefs, but the coming of lighthouse and coast guard families, and a permanent curate after 1919, to Inis Beag introduced successive changes which gradually widened the cultural gap between the two. Another factor of importance hindering acculturation in Inis Thiar has been its lack of good landing facilities for visitors to come ashore; the steamer must stand off the jetty of Inis Thiar in the unprotected and often turbulent sound and be met by canoes, whereas it can approach closely the strand of Inis Beag, between the jetty and a point of land, where under most weather conditions it is relatively calm.

Visitors to Inis Beag also hold the same opinion of the two cultures, and the most often made comparison between the islands is the Irish spoken in them. The people of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar recognize slight differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation between the two speech communities, but they seldom rank their respective proficiencies, unless outsiders in one island assert that the Gaelic spoken in the other is "purer." Once a tourist angered visiting Inis Thiar fishermen in my presence by publicly pronouncing that the Irish in Inis Beag is superior, and that he would send his children here to learn Gaelic and then to Inis Thiar to learn English; the tongue-in-check statement was prompted by a discussion of the linguistic skills of the publican in the neighboring island, who is called "the English speaker" because of the rapidity of his speech and chronic misuse of esoteric English words. Indigenous nativists are far more numerous and militant in Inis Thiar than in Inis Beag, and the anger of the fishermen reflected pride in their own culture and their belief that it is more traditional than that of Inis Beag.

Inis Thiar folk are thought by their neighbors to the east to be more industrious and extroverted than themselves. They are believed to rise earlier, work longer and more energetically with fewer breaks for contemplation or gossip with

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624 partners to come to Inis Beag to confer with him, knowing that they were ill with
536 influenza, which resulted in a serious outbreak of the disease shortly afterward. A
[793] fire which broke out in a storage room next to the house of the king some months
[731] after the shipwreck was viewed by irate islanders as divine retribution for his "greed and selfishness."

624 In Ireland, the term "gombeen" is used to demean the usurious shopkeeper,
444 but this word is directed against the king only by those who most dislike him, and
275 then to connote what they consider a combination of piety and avarice in his behavior rather than his economic practices. His role as moral guardian, with frequent instruction and reprimand as to manners and misdemeanors to men in the pub and children visiting the shop, is deeply resented by many. He does not care to have women make purchases in the shop, where they can observe men drinking and be observed in turn, ostensibly on moral grounds; he urges that children do the marketing instead, not for the convenience of their mothers, it is said, but because he can overcharge and short-change them more easily. To dissuade women from shopping, he reads out their lists and talks with them about family affairs in a loud whisper, so that they have no privacy. The men complain not only of his alleged practice of overcharging and short-changing them late at night when the pub is overcrowded with "light headed" drinkers, but also of his criticizing their actions in public, his frequent closing of the pub before midnight, and his refusal to serve those whom he feels have "taken too much" or those about to attend a party where more drinks will be proffered them.

624 Supporters of Fine Gael and Labour, among others, object to the manner in
664 which the king curries the favor of Fianna Fail representatives and campaigns for
666 the party. He is accused of using illegal tactics, such as haranguing voters outside of the school as they enter to cast their ballots, in his endeavor to keep Fianna Fail
624 in power. A more serious charge related to this one is his opposition to change in
657 Inis Beag which might benefit the population as a whole, an opposition which
178 explains his support of political party and church—both conservative forces. It is asserted that, just as the government wants to preserve the Gaelic language and supposed Celtic virtues of the folk and the church their strength of belief and morality and thus underwrite the *status quo*, the senior publican wants no changes which might threaten his economic position and control over the lives of the islanders. To this end, he is thought to use his influence with priests and politicians who are in a position to modify local conditions.

184 Absent from Inis Beag is the evening *cuaird* of old men, which plays such
573 a decisive role in the political and social life of villages on the mainland. It is a
887 clique of visitors who usually convene at a particular home, called the "old men's house," to formulate local policies.

626 Much of the community's relation to the outer world is debated here and deter-
573 mined by the old men's agreement.... It is here that petitions for roads, for relief work in winter, for extension of agricultural prize schemes, and all of the "political" business of the county council and its committees originates on the side of the local community. It is here too that the community reaches its unanimity in party voting.... Here it is too that the community makes its appraisal of its own members and those with whom it is in contact. And that appraisal tells quite heavily in the behavior the community will adopt toward the person or

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556 tunity to create additional capital; they are content to rest on their psychological
[157] laurels, are limited in their aspirations, and are indolent. They betray a smugness
[124] of attitude much resented by their less prestigeful fellows. A woman spoke contemptuously of the "great estates" boasted of by these men, when she discussed with me the many land disputes that she had witnessed during her lifetime.

554 When one asks the folk to rank prestige symbols and the positions of
556 individuals in the status hierarchy, the only consensus which emerges is the
423 placing of land and capital at the apex of the rank order of symbols, the assigning of men who possess these in greatest quantity to the top of the hierarchy, and the placing of landless men at the bottom. Least prestigeful among the landless are those who are descendants of fisherfolk, most of whose families were recent migrants to Inis Beag. An example of the verbal abuse to which they are subjected is a remark made to one of them by the king in a heated argument, who said, "Why don't you spend your time gathering periwinkles like your father?"; the man replied with equal venom, "Who was your father, a king?" Other prestige symbols delineated by the folk, although not mentioned by all and variously ranked, are advanced education, prestigeful kin abroad, economic skills, and singing, dancing, and storytelling abilities. Strength and courage occasionally are cited, but they
[178] are considered symbols of a past era (which nativism and primitivism make difficult to assess) and have come to lose much of their significance.

554 Only one family in the island prides itself on its material possessions,
556 because of the influence of the householder's brother in the United States who
[123] sends remittances, so it is said, and often visits Inis Beag for lengthy stays. I was asked to take photographs of this family, whose members posed before various pieces of modern furniture and appliances, to be sent to relatives—the only such
[356] request ever made of me. There are a few families, however, which pride themselves
[515] on the neatness and cleanliness of their houses and streets and the appearance
171 of their members, and they are apt to denigrate families which are slovenly. The
[184] lack of emphasis on material possessions in Inis Beag presents a startling contrast to the situation which prevails in most of the Western world, including many peasant societies and the mainland Irish; equally contrasting is the apparent lack of opprobrium attached to doing relief work on the roads and receiving the dole.

555 Although 28 islanders have received some secondary education during the
871 past 15 years (excluding priests and nuns), only 2 have attended university—both of them before the Second World War at University College, Dublin. Two women and a man have become teachers, and the former have returned to Inis Beag to teach in the national school. Most of the advanced students today are preparing to teach or nurse or are gaining technical skills, and it is not expected by their parents that they will return to the island to live permanently. Families are boastful of their members with advanced education, and those families without such representation often urge their children to do better in the local school, and try to muster financial support for their high school education if scholarships are not forthcoming. I was told by a man disgusted with the lack of interest in school shown by his son, "The man who uses a pen is better off than the man who uses a
557 spade or trammel net." Prestige also is gained through having a close relative
793 become a nun or priest or achieve success in the business or professional world,
[555]

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to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during the previous weeks.

The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago, still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands. On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth, rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of paganism. Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation. The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual entities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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776
787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
[562] recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[789] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island, shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
[823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959 until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey. Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt compelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthropological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763
776 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night, and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered overly superstitious.

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persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan supernatural varied among the folk.

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a "robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puritanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway, made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen (as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the headless body. one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus (see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incorporating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land, altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during 1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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misfortune to those whom he compliments. The extent of his power is measured by how soon after the compliment his victim suffers, and how serious is the calamity. Most feared of recent witches is a man who as a youth caused a newly arrived curate on his first walk of the island to fall and break his leg; within seconds after the boy praised the vigorous stride of the priest, "the poor creature disappeared behind a fence, feet over head." The folk seldom compliment one another, and when they do they append "God bless you." to the statement as a precautionary incantation. Persons with the evil eye neglect to do this, it is said. I often have wondered—when in a mood to credit the existence of fairies which turn on water faucets in the dead of night—if a series of misfortunes which befell me during 1960 and 1961 was somehow linked to one of these persons wishing me a good year, without uttering "God bless you.", as my wife and I put off the strand in a canoe at the end of our research. The same incantation is voiced by those in the vicinity of one who sneezes—in this case to prevent his soul from being captured by the fairies. It is tempting to attribute the unwillingness of Irish peasants generally to pay compliments to the age-old but now forgotten dread of being accused of the evil eye and of inviting fairies and hag witches to substitute changelings for human children.

Priests of the church at least a century ago rid Inis Beag of most religious practitioners of pagan disposition, but there is evidence that before their acculturative influence was felt diviners and workers of good and evil magic practiced techniques which had their roots in the Iron Age. Divining now is restricted mostly to the seeking of omens by everyone, and the astrological and tea leaf reading skills of several persons who do not charge for their services. The principal workers of magic in the past were herbalists, animal doctors, and bone setters; an animal doctor in Inis Beag and a bone setter in a nearby island still ply their inherited specialties for pay, but both men claim that they are practical folk physicians and do not command pagan or Christian spiritual powers. Just as the islanders share a common body of omens which are used to avoid the misfortunes and compound the benefits in store for them, they also share a common knowledge of folk medicines, which some believe to be more efficacious than the medicines provided by doctor and nurse. Indigenous medicines once were prescribed by workers of magic, misnamed "herb witches"—old women who gathered plants at dawn and "brewed" them in a variety of ways to affect various cures. The dew on the plants, as well as the manner in which they were compounded, gave these medicines a magical potency. To meet such a witch as she was returning from collecting ingredients meant that one was doomed to take on the affliction of the patient being treated by the hag. A similar belief, well represented in the folklore of the islanders, is the transference of disease from a human being to an animal that he has befriended earlier.

Christian and Pagan Reinterpretations

The four quarterly festivals of the Celts were: Imbolc, celebrated on February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, Lughnasa on August 1st, and Samhain on November 1st.

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539 796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November 11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with [178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main [182] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous [252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter. 796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during 796 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few 798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is 796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be 796 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck 782 during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes [234] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying [808] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood [237] to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to 825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to 417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following 53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in 1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed [184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with 776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld. 771 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies; 775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

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and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves constantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments, hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first opportunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief. Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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add color and give point: to guide, to encourage, to praise, to admonish, to reprove, and to implement the art of "indirection" so dear to the Irish. Many are subtle and cannot be understood unless the history and culture of Inis Beag and Ireland are known to the listener. Such a one is, "Come raise the bag on me." This proverb derives from the days of the famine, when maize (corn) was distributed to the poor and hungry; an old woman on the mainland nearby with eight mouths to feed was given a one pound sack, and she asked an official to help her with the "great load." Now it is employed whenever someone receives less than he anticipated. Both tales and proverbs serve enculturative ends by providing models of proper behavior to infants and children. Riddles, told only by the very young, also function in this manner—to sharpen the wits.

Music, Song, and Dance

Many times I have heard it said on the mainland that the folk of Inis Beag were in the past, and still are, "poor" musicians, singers, and dancers. It is claimed that once there were competent "fiddlers," pipers, tin whistle and flute players, and accordion, concertina, and melodeon players in the island, but during the months that my wife and I lived there, our portable phonograph and two dozen records —along with the accordions of several inexpert musicians, mostly young men trying to master the instrument—provided most of the music for dancing. Music also is produced by lilting, which is known as "mouth music" or "*pus* music" (*pus* being a Gaelic word for mouth). I have witnessed only one man lilt to accompany step dancing, and he for never more than three minutes without pause because of his advanced age; at 73 years, he can lilt while dancing a brief jig himself.

The violin is played holding its base in the crook of the elbow, while the forearm is supported on the thigh of the seated musician. The sole fiddler in 1960 was the *seanchaí*, and he could step dance, sing, and recite poetry as well with a high order of excellence for a man of 72 years. Much more difficult to play than its mouth blown counterpart of Scottish fame, the Irish Uilleann bagpipe is played while seated, and its windbag inflated by a bellow manipulated by movements of the upper arm. Since its drone pipes do not dominate the chanter, or melody pipe, the music produced with this bagpipe is more tuneful than that of the Highland instrument: as one islander put it, "The Scottish pipes make you want to charge into battle, while ours make you want to leap up and dance." Today, the only pipe music heard in Inis Beag is played during the summer, when occasionally a mainland piper is hired to furnish music to dance to for children attending summer language school. Tin whistle players usually perform on the flute also, since the former instrument is a smaller, vertically played cousin of the latter, somewhat resembling the recorder. It is extremely common on the mainland, but no longer played in Inis Beag except infrequently by visitors. Although the accordion and related wind instruments have achieved a new popularity owing to the vogue of the "*céilí* band," in which they assume a commanding position, they were played widely in the island during the last century after being introduced by lighthouse

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and coast guard personnel. Only four tunes are played by Inis Beag accordionists to accompany dancing.

Instrumentalists, lilters, and singers traditionally performed individually; music was played by a fiddler or flutist and sung by a lilter only to serve solo and figure dancers, and a singer never was joined by others in chorus or accompanied by an instrument. But now the dancers, young and old alike, choose to dance to the lively jigs and reels of the *céilí* band, which plays modern Irish "country dance music." My wife and I discovered that the folk preferred our *céilí* band records for dancing, and were reticent about performing to the music of our many records of fiddling, piping, and flute and tin whistle playing of exceptional quality. On several occasions, we played jazz and classical recordings to groups assembled in our home, to which the islanders listened politely but indifferently. Our *céilí* band records seemed to be quite as acceptable as an accordion at dances and in the pub, and I frequently shared equally with an instrumentalist the time spent in furnishing music for a night long party.

Of the Irish song tradition, Donal O'Sullivan writes: "There is, indeed, a consensus of informed opinion as to its exceeding beauty. . . . In sheer abundance, also, it is probably not surpassed by that of any nation of comparable area and population: for this small and thinly inhabited island has yielded . . . many thousands of melodies of unusual diversity—all of them the anonymous product of the people . . ." (O'Sullivan 1961:5). The Inis Beag folk, as in the case of their music, share but a small portion of this vast body of song. Only a few songs sung publicly by less than a dozen islanders are in Irish, and these are predominantly local compositions. Most of the songs have texts in English and are common to the mainland as well, and of these but a handful are true folk songs—"anonymous product of the people"—rather than broadsides (printed, sold, and memorized) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tunes and songs, just as tale types and motifs, of the Irish often are shared with British and Continental neighbors, and it is hard to know their points of origin and paths of diffusion. Some islanders believe that a few of their songs—such as "The Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow"—were obtained by overhearing the fairies at play. Only one composer is active in the vicinity of Inis Beag at the present time; he is a young man from Inis Thiar who excels at composing songs in Irish based on recent events of importance in and near the two islands. A song of his, which describes the incidents arising out of the grounding of the steamer on a sand bar off Inis Thiar several years ago, is one of the most sung ballads in the region.

Singing is a popular pastime in Inis Beag, particularly among men in the pubs, and several islanders of both sexes have outstanding voices by Irish standards. I tape recorded only 38 songs (13 in Gaelic) and found their major themes to be sentimental, patriotic, and humorous—stressing death, unrequited love, emigration and the parting of relatives and friends, conflict in various forms with the English, and lives of the political "martyrs." Love songs, lullabies, humorous songs, religious songs, laments, drinking songs, and songs of occupation (such as ploughing, milking, and spinning) are the major indigenous Irish folk song categories (O'Sullivan 1961:39), but some are absent and others are underrepresented in Inis Beag. Also absent are carols, as well as boat songs like those of the Gaelic speaking Scottish fishermen.

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

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the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although inheritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional subcultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establishment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "villages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, separated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure. On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices,

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by the act of complimenting their victims. Other religious retentions found in Inis Beag are a multitude of taboos, divination through the seeking of omens, magical charms and incantations of a protective nature, and an emphasis on "natural" foods, folk medicines, and other products impinging on the human body.

It is believed by many people in Ireland that the Catholicism of the islanders embodies an ideal unattained on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for the world. In fact, the worship of the folk is obsessively oriented toward salvation in the next world, with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a resemblance to polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and Irish saints; Christian as well as pagan rituals and religious artifacts are often employed to serve magical ends; and many beliefs that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or Ireland. Christian morality in its "outward" manifestations is realized to a remarkable degree. This can be attributed, in part, to the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation; but, more importantly, it results from the already-mentioned techniques of social control exercised by the clergy, based on an overwhelming fear of damnation.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The most active researchers in Inis Beag have been folklorists. Although ethnology as a discipline is not represented in the national universities and elsewhere in the Republic, folklore in the European humanistic tradition is strongly developed. The deliberate recording of the immense body of Irish folklore, folk beliefs, and folk customs began in the early part of the last century, was spurred by nativism—of which the Gaelic Revival was the main strand, and was institutionalized in the Republic with the formation of, first, the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1926, then the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, and, finally, the Irish Folklore Commission in 1936 (Delargy 1957). For many years, commission collectors have visited Inis Beag, recording mostly the verbal art and material traits—with their associated behavior—of the island folk. They have not attempted to describe and analyze functionally and dynamically the total culture of the island; their visits have been brief and intermit-

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831 the world's societies. Sex never is discussed in the home when children
864 are about; only three mothers admitted giving advice, briefly and incompletely, to their daughters. We were told that boys are better advised than girls, but that the former learn about sex informally from older boys and men and from observing animals. Most respondents who were questioned about sexual instructions given to youths expressed the belief that "after marriage nature takes its course," thus negating the need for anxiety-creating and embarrassing personal confrontation of parents and
[163] offspring. We were unable to discover any cases of childlessness based on
[184] sexual ignorance of spouses, as reported from other regions of peasant
83 Ireland. Also, we were unable to discover knowledge of the sexual categories utilized by researchers in sex: insertion of tongue while kissing, male mouth on female breast, female hand on penis, cunnilingus, fellatio, femoral coitus, anal coitus, extramarital coitus, manifest homosexuality, sexual contact with animals, fetishism, and sado-masochistic behavior. Some of these activities may be practiced by particular individuals and couples; however, without a doubt they are deviant forms in Inis Beag, about which information is difficult to come by.

841 Menstruation and menopause arouse profound misgivings among
[886] women of the island, because few of them comprehend their physiological
[123] significance. My wife was called on to explain these processes more than any other phenomena related to sex. When they reach puberty, most girls are unprepared for the first menstrual flow and find the experience a traumatic one—especially when their mothers are unable to provide
828 a satisfactory explanation for it. And it is commonly believed that the
886 menopause can induce "madness"; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties and, in a few cases, have confined themselves to bed until death, years later. Others have so retired as a result of depressive and masochistic states. Yet the harbingers of "insanity" are simply the physical symptoms announcing the onset
158 of menopause. In Inis Beag, these include severe headaches, hot flashes,
828 faintness in crowds and enclosed places, and severe anxiety. Mental
[784] illness is also held to be inherited or caused by inbreeding (or by the Devil, by God punishing a sinner, or by malignant pagan beings) and stigmatizes the family of the afflicted. One old man came close to revealing what is probably the major cause of neuroses and psychoses in Ireland, when he explained the incarceration of an Inis Beag curate in a mental institution for clerics as caused by his constant association with
828 a pretty housekeeper, who "drove him mad from frustration." This elder advocated that only plain-appearing older women (who would not "gab"

recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,